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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses an approach which used the development principles of competency based education as guidelines for the training of social studies teachers at the University of Houston. Competencies identified for training social studies teachers will be either generic or specialized. Generic competencies reflect those teaching behaviors considered essential for all teachers to master so that they can teach their subject within the context of the entire school curriculum. Specialized competencies for the social studies can then build and extend these generic skills and respond to the unique dimensions of social studies education. The paper lists the 16 generic competencies which all students preparing to teach at the University of Houston are expected to demonstrate. In developing the social studies competencies, the Houston faculty first established assumptions, for example, "optimal learning occurs when the future teacher is presented with a model of the teacher he or she is expected to become." Goals which serve as the parameters of the social studies program were then derived from the assumptions, for example, "model the behaviors expected of their students." Social studies competencies were then grouped into four components: (1) goal determination in the social studies; (2) instructional design, strategies, and materials in the social studies; (3) implementation and demonstration in social studies; and (4) consequence and evaluation in the social studies. Competency statements and instructional objectives for each component were developed and served as the basis for the design of learning experiences for preservice teachers. These components which can be used as the starting point for design are illustrated in the paper. (Author/RM)

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DEVELOPING SOCIAL STUDIES COMPETENCIES: DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Paper presented to the Special Interest Group on Competency Based Education of the National Council for the Social Studies

November 23, 1981

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DEVELOPING SOCIAL STUDIES COMPETENCIES: DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

CBTE may be dead; perhaps even buried. But there is reason to suspect that principles and assumptions which gave birth to the competency based movement in teacher education may last for years to come. They are, in essence, those principles which many believe to be basic to the development and practice of a professional set of behaviors.

In looking toward the future in social studies teacher education, a charge given us in the preparation of this paper, we found the development principles of CBE serve well as a guideline for the training of social studies teachers. In designing a teacher training program, two major decisions have to be made. First, the competencies which shall serve as the goals of the program have to be specified. Second, an effective system for assisting students to develop those competencies must be determined. Try as we may, we cannot escape the fundamental importance of these two steps in teacher preparation. As teacher educators, we must be clear about those behaviors we are attempting to train teachers to employ. And we must be effective in our efforts to facilitate that training.

We all struggle with the problem of having to specify competencies in the absence of an empirical research base to support this effort. Validated knowledge of what constitutes effective teaching behaviors is very limited. For this reason, must approach the task by identifying assumptions about the nature of learning, the needs of society, and the role of the effective teacher.

These assumptions form the basis for subsequent specification of competencies. It is important that they be treated as hypotheses. Competency statement reflect our best "hunches" regarding those behaviors related to effective teaching. As hypotheses, however, competency statements are subject to change as additional knowledge becomes available.

Competencies identified for training social studies teachers will be either generic or speciflized. Generic competencies reflect those teaching behaviors considered essential for all teachers to master if they are to be effective, regardless of subject field or level (elementary or secondary) of preparation. Generic competencies are derived primarily from assumptions about learning, teaching, and human development. Specialized competencies describe those behaviors considered essential for effective teaching of a subject area or level. These competencies usually build upon generic competencies and are related and derived from assumptions and/or knowledge unique to particilar disciplines.

Since preservice social studies teachers are prepared to teach their subject within the context of the entire school curriculum, it is important that they develop generic competencies. Social studies competencies can then build and extend those generic skills and respond to the unique dimensions of social studies education.

Many statements of generic competencies exist in the literature. Most teacher training institutions who have worked in this field have developed a set of competencies which serve as a framework for their entire teaching training program. We would like to share one set of such generic competencies as an example of what can be done in this area. These come from the University of Houston.[1]

All students preparing to teach at the University of Houston are expected to demonstrate successfully the following sixteen generic competencies. They must demonstrate the ability to:

1. Identify the learner's emotional, social, physical, and intellectual needs.
2. Identify and/or specify instructional goals and objectives which are based on learner's needs.
3. Design instruction appropriate to goals and objectives.
4. Implement instruction that is consistent with plans.
5. Design and implement evaluation procedures which focus on learner achievement and instructional effectiveness.
6. Integrate into instruction the cultural environment of students.
7. Demonstrate a repertoire of instructional models and teaching skills appropriate to specified objectives and to particular learners.
8. Promote effective patterns of communication.
9. Use resources appropriate to instructional objectives.
10. Modify instruction on the basis of learner's verbal and non-verbal feedback during instruction.
11. Use organizational and management skills to establish a maximally effective learning environment.
12. Identify and react with sensitivity to the needs and feelings of self and others.
13. Exhibit openness and flexibility.
14. Work effectively as a member of a professional team.

15. Analyze professional effectiveness and continually strive to increase that effectiveness.
16. Design and implement instruction which incorporates career education concepts.

The instructional system used at Houston is designed to operate on the premise that students are to be held accountable for the demonstration, not the acquisition of competencies. Objectives and assessment criteria are made clear and public to the student who is responsible for meeting them.

The program is divided into four phases. During Phases I and II, students are provided experiences which focus on developing generic teaching skills. They are provided opportunity to observe and practice in a limited way in public school classroom situations.

During Phase III, students are expected to integrate specific methods strategies into their teaching repertoires. Social studies assumes a new meaning at this point because students must now demonstrate the ability to apply generic strategies using a social studies format. In addition, specialized competencies in social studies are introduced. Each social studies competency must be satisfactorily demonstrated before the student is allowed to enter the student teaching phase of the program.

Assumptions were established by the Houston faculty for the social studies component. They served as the hypotheses about what effective social studies teachers need to know and be able to do in order to be effective. Examples of these assumptions are:

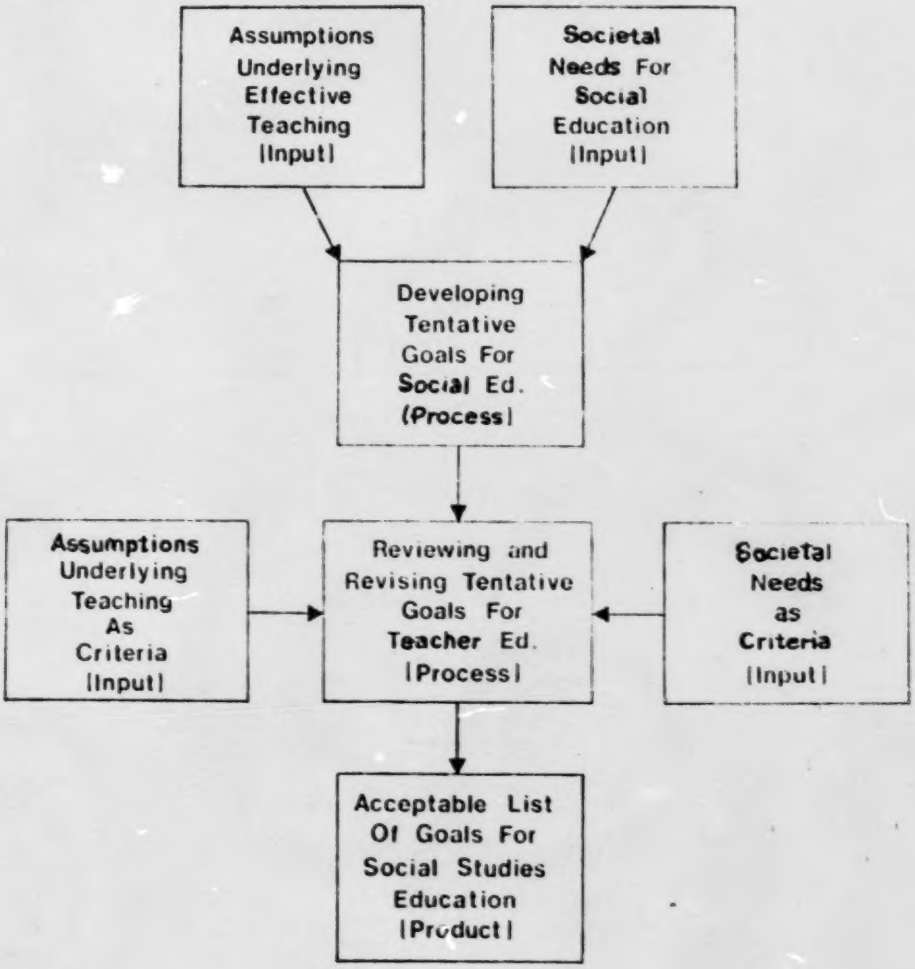
1. Society needs social studies teachers and students who are

dedicated to rational decision making if the democratic process is to function efficiently.

2. Society needs social studies teachers and students who are prepared for and actively participating in a multicultural society.
3. Society needs social studies teachers and students who are operating at a principled stage of moral development.
4. Optimal learning occurs when data are organized according to the concepts and generalizations of each social science discipline.
5. Optimal learning occurs when the teacher provides the student with a variety of instructional modes relevant to the individual needs of his students.
6. Optimal learning occurs when teachers and students learn to think critically using an inductive mode for processing social studies data.
7. Optimal learning occurs when teachers and students are encouraged to examine their own values.
8. Optimal learning occurs when the future teacher is presented with a model of the teacher he or she is expected to become.[2]

Assumptions such as these constitute the building blocks of the total social studies program. As seen in Figure 1, goals are derived from the assumptions. They are broad and inclusive, but not too sweeping as to invite a variety of interpretations. These goals serve as the parameters of the social studies program placing into practice the assumptions derived from societal needs and learning theory.

FIGURE 1[3]


Assumptions Underlying Effective Teaching (Input)
Societal Needs For Social Education (Input)
Developing Tentative Goals For Social Ed. (Process)
Assumptions Underlying Teaching As Criteria (Input)
Reviewing and Revising Tentative Goals For Teacher Ed. (Process)
Societal Needs as Criteria (Input)
Acceptable List Of Goals For Social Studies Education (Product)

-- SPECIFYING GOALS FOR A SOCIAL STUDIES METHODS COMPONENT

The assumptions gave rise to goal statements for the social studies teacher preparation program. The social studies component was seen as responsible for perparing teachers who will:

The social studies component will prepare teachers who will -

1. Provide opportunities for students to engage in the process of rational decision making.
2. Actively participate in a multicultural society.
3. Stimulate the moral development of their students.
4. Provide the framework for organization of data through concepts and generalizations from the social sciences and related areas.
5. Use a variety of instructional modes depending on the needs of their students.
6. Guide students through a variety of inquiry processes.
7. Encourage and aid students in examining and clarifying their own values.
8. Model the behaviors expected of their students.

Social studies competencies were then grouped into four general components: (1) goal determination in the social studies; (2) instructional design, strategies and materials in the social studies; (3) implementation and demonstration in social studies; and (4) consequence and evaluation in the social studies. Competency statements and instructional objectives for each component were developed and served as the basis for the design of learning experiences for preservice teachers. These components can be illustrated as follows:

Goal Determination in the Social Studies

The student will be able to establish social studies goals for a classroom of students. The student will be able to defend the goals he or she has established in terms of the needs and interests of children, the needs and interests of society, and prove that within the established goals he or she has maintained the integrity of the social sciences.

1. Analyzing and evaluating primary educational purposes as a variable in establishing social studies instructional goals:
   - 1.1 Given literature reflecting various positions regarding the goals of social studies education, the student will be able to identify at least three philosophical positions for teaching social studies and explain the relationship of purpose, content, and methodology for each position.
   - 1.2 Given a set of social studies instructional goals, the student will be able to identify and describe the primary educational purpose reflected in each goal.
   - 1.3 Given various social studies instructional goals, the student will be able to analyze and evaluate these goals in terms of their consequences for learners.
   - 1.4 Having established his or her own beliefs concerning the purposes of social studies, the student will be able to construct and evaluate a set of instructional goals which could serve as the basic framework for

developing a comprehensive social studies program for students at the elementary level.

2. Classifying instructional goals into categories of instructional purpose:

   2.1 The student will be able to construct social studies instructional goals which reflect the educational purposes of skills development, information acquisition, conceptual development, intellectual process development, interpersonal relations, and intrapersonal relations.

3. Nature of the Social Sciences:

   3.1 The student will be able to describe each social science disciplines in terms of an imposed body of knowledge, a method of investigation, and a proof process.

Instructional Design, Strategies, and Materials in the Social Studies

The student will be able to design a social studies module using goals determined through the application of knowledges, skills, etc., developed in Component I.

1.1 The student will be able to identify the commonalities of social studies instructional design including concepts and generalizations, value orientations, and modes of inquiry.

1.2 The student will be able to identify, explain, and

demonstrate various models for teaching the social studies.

1.3 The student will be able to identify and establish a set of learning materials appropriate to the models used in the learning experiences developed.

Implementation and Demonstration in Social Studies

The student will implement a teaching model or a portion of a model of social studies instruction in an elementary classroom. During the implementation, the student will demonstrate an understanding of social studies goal determination, instructional design, teaching processes, and student evaluation appropriate to various models of instruction.

Consequence and Evaluation in the Social Studies

The student will be able to effect an analysis process of what he or she has taught, how he or she has taught it, and the effect of those processes on pupil behavior. The student will use the data gathered to modify his or her social studies goals, designs, and strategies to effect more appropriate behaviors in his or her social studies teaching behaviors.

The four identified components provide a broad range of general competencies that can serve as the starting point for designing the social studies component in a CBTE framework. It must be remembered,

however, that in the social studies, more than any other curriculum area, personalization of curriculum and instruction is of the utmost importance. For this reason, the major purpose of the social studies methods component is to provide the student with a range of curriculum and instructional alternatives.

Whatever system or approach you use in developing your social studies teacher preparation programs in the future, the bottom line will always be deciding what behaviors you believe to be positively related to effective teaching and designing instructional programs to facilitate acquisition of those behaviors. That is the only role a professional school can take; for indeed the definition of a "professional" is one who possesses a body of knowledge and skills known (or assumed) to be related to the effective practice of that craft. We, as teacher educators, cannot escape that responsibility. And CBE continues to provide a sound rationale and set of guidelines for developing, delivering and evaluating programs of teacher preparation.

FOOTNOTES

[1] "Attachment Three: The Professional Teacher Preparation Program," Bench Mark Data on the Undergraduate Professional Teacher Preparation Program," Unpublished memorandum from Loye Y. Hollis, College of Education, University of Houston, March 1, 1976. pp. 9-10.

[2] Developed in cooperation with Dr. Don Baden, University of Illinois at Edwardsville.

[3] Adapted from James Cooper, Wilford Weber, and Charles Johnson. A Systems Approach to Program Design (Berkeley: McCutcheon Publishing Corporation, 1973, p. 48